



State Complaints

Pursuant to federal (Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act IDEA '04) and local laws, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) receives and investigates written complaints regarding an alleged violation of the special education services provided to children in the District of Columbia. The content of the complaint can include any issue related to compliance with IDEA including, but not limited to: disagreements about the identification of a child with a disability, an evaluation of a child with a disability, the educational placement and/or services of a child with disability, and the provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to a child with a disability. Upon completion of a thorough investigation, a Letter of Determination is issued explaining whether the local school district is in compliance or is not in compliance with federal and local laws. If the district is not in compliance, then a corrective action plan is issued to ensure compliance.

The OSSE seeks to resolve issues and/disputes early that arise in the delivery of special education services to children with disabilities through various Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms such as mediation, state complaints, and early intervention strategies of staff. The goal is to assist parents and school system staff in working collaboratively together to resolve their concerns early. In this manner children with disabilities can receive a free and appropriate education without interruption. Some of the ways in which staff achieves this goal include the following:

- Provide training/workshops for school district personnel regarding the benefits of early dispute resolution like mediation and state complaints
- Provide information to school district staff to ensure that they are up to date with legal mandates, compliance issues and best practices in other jurisdictions
- Provide orientation and technical assistance to school districts on effective ways to resolve disputes through early intervention strategies
- Assist school districts in complying with mandated legal responsibilities to ensure that they are in compliance with all of the provisions necessary to provide children with disabilities a FAPE
- Effectively investigate and process disputes and written complaints to ensure that parents and children with disabilities receive what they are entitled to under federal and local laws

For additional information regarding the State complaint process, please contact:

Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Department of Special Education
Attn: William Knudsen
Deputy Assistant Superintendent, Monitoring and Compliance
810 First Street, N.E. – 5th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20002
Main #:202-727-2824 Fax #: 202-741-0227